



INITIATIVE | WEEK 2 | SEPTEMBER 12, 2021

4th-5th Lesson

Help!

Life App: Initiative—Seeing what needs to be done and doing it

Bible Story: Help! (Nehemiah Helps the Poor) • Nehemiah 5

Key Question: Who do you see being treated unfairly?

Bottom Line: Look for ways to make things right.

Basic Truth: I am made for a purpose so I have value

Memory Verse: Work at everything you do with all your heart. Work as if you were working for the Lord. Colossians 3:23a (NIRV)

**KID CONNECT:
10 MINUTES**

**LARGE GROUP:
30 MINUTES**

**SMALL GROUP:
20 MINUTES**

LEADER BIBLE STUDY

God took the initiative by sending Jesus to show us how much He loves us and fix the relationship between us. When we see a need and choose to do something about it, we reflect God's image in us. Through our initiative, others can see the reality of God's love for them. As kids discover more about how we can reflect God's character through taking initiative, they'll spend the month studying the life of Nehemiah. Nehemiah's life is a perfect example of someone who heard about a need, decided to check it out, trusted God, and dropped everything to finish the project. We can't wait to see how God helps your kids discover how they can show initiative in their lives.

Key Question: Who do you see being treated unfairly? Initiative isn't just about tasks that people need to accomplish. Often what needs to be done has something to do with how people are being treated and broken relationships. Preteens are becoming more sensitive to the needs of others. With this question, we can begin helping them understand something about empathy and what they can do to help the people around them.

In week two, we see a different part of Nehemiah's story. In **Nehemiah 5:1-12**, we discover that while everyone was building the wall, an issue arose. Some of the Israelites were severely mistreating each other. Even though Nehemiah was in charge of rebuilding the wall, he stopped building the wall to confront the issue. Helping others who were mistreated was more important than finishing the wall. He cared enough about the people to say to help them figure out a solution.

Bottom Line: Look for ways to make things right. As they grow up, kids will notice others in need. They may see when others are being mistreated. We pray that kids will start to understand how they can be part of the solution to helping these situations and fixing what's broken. Maybe they can do this on their own; perhaps they need help from a trusted adult. Either way, we pray that they take the initiative to help instead of thinking it's someone else's problem. God can use them along with the trusted adults in their life to make an impact in the lives of others.

KID CONNECT

WELCOME TIME

(VIDEO: INTRO MUSIC)

Play intro music and greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group.

OPENING ACTIVITY:

(No Supplies)

During this time, concentrate on getting to know your group and building a relationship between you all. Create a place where they feel like someone knows them and that they belong. A great way to do that is to pull them into an activity (coloring, LEGOs, etc.) and ask them questions. Here are some suggestions:

- What school do you go to?
- What do you like to do for fun?
- If you could ride on any animal, what would be the most fun/most difficult?
- Do you have any siblings/pets? What are their names?
- If you could build anything, what would you build?
- What is the worst smell in the world?

LARGE GROUP

COUNTDOWN AND WELCOME

(VIDEO: COUNTDOWN, SLIDE: KIDCITY EXPECTATIONS)

Show the countdown video as you transition to Large Group. Set it to end as the session begins.

The Large Group Leader has lots of energy as he or she welcomes everyone to KidCity. The LGL is relatable and inviting. LGLs can talk about something that happened culturally throughout the week like a big sports game, movie opening, a viral video on YouTube, holiday, etc. The LGL tells them how excited he or she is that they're there and briefly runs through what they can expect. This is especially helpful for first-time guests to make them feel like they know what's happening.

HOST: Welcome everyone! I'm so glad you are able to come hang out with us in KidCity today. My name is [INSERT NAME]. We are going to have a lot of fun today by playing a game, singing some incredible songs that worship God, and then we are going to hear an amazing true story from God's Word, the Bible.

But first, let's quickly go over our KidCity Expectations (rules) so we can make sure that we make the most of our time today: *(Don't dwell on these too long, but make sure you review them briefly so we can set everyone up for success.)*

1. Be Kind – We need to be kind with our words and actions to our friends, leaders, and the space that we are using.
2. Be Safe – Make wise choices with your actions and words.
3. Have Fun – Participate in what we are doing! It's no fun just sitting there...

Let's kick off today by playing a game!

LARGE GROUP GAME

LET IT GO

(Balloons, Balloon Pumps, Cardboard Planet)

LGL: "Kids! Leaders! Friends! I have in my hand the one thing that is a source of fun and fear for almost every human being on the planet. I'm, of course, talking about *(hold up the balloon) the balloon.*"

"Some love the balloon. Some fear the balloon. Some are indifferent to the balloon, but we don't talk about those people. However, everyone—and by everyone, I mean *me*—has a temptation when handed a balloon that's not tied off. Allow me to demonstrate."

Inflate the balloon with the pump and hold it shut so no air escapes. Hand the balloon off to someone in the Large Group, having him or her pinch the end shut.

"You have the balloon now. Its life is in your hands. What do you desperately want to do with that balloon?"
They should say, "Let it go."

"(Regardless of the kid's gender, say) Go ahead, Elsa. Let it go."

Watch as the balloon launches and sputters around the room. Pick it up when it lands.

"Yep. If you have a heartbeat, you'll feel the black-hole-like pull to let go of a balloon and watch it flop around the room. So today at KidCity I say, why resist? Let's give tons of kids in here balloons. And while we're at it, let's make a game out of it with some fun prizes! This game is called 'Stick the Landing!' Who's ready?"

Have leaders help hand out balloons—but make sure to tell them NOT to blow them up. Using the pumps will ensure that no one's breath or spit is going to get flung around the room.

Balloons are color-coded, meaning each "team" has a color. Once balloons are handed out, continue.

"On the floor is an exoplanet that scientists have recently discovered in the Virgo constellation. They've called it The Pink Planet, because the heat generated from the surface gives off a gentle, magenta hue. There's also a rumor that the planet is covered entirely with diamonds."

"Because of that, scientists and astronauts want to land on it as soon as possible—but they'll need to launch a few probes first. That's where you come in! You'll pump up your balloons, get in a giant circle around the planet, and lunch

your probes! The team, designated by the colors, with the most probes that land on the planet will be the winners! If you're ready, let's get pumping!"

Have leaders help pump up the balloons. Gather the kids in a wide circle a good 8-10 feet away from the center "planet" on the ground, and on your countdown, launch the balloons.

Count up the balloons that land on the planet and declare a winner, handing our prizes to the winning team.

"Great job! Let's hear it for our winners! Now, let's launch into some amazing worship to our amazing God!"

WORSHIP

(VIDEO: ALIVE, WAVEWALKER)

INTRODUCE THE SESSION

(SLIDE: LIFE APP)

(No Supplies)

Does anyone remember what our Life App is this month? *(Pause)* That's right, it's INITIATIVE.

(SLIDE: LIFE APP) "Initiative is seeing what needs to be done and doing it."

"Quick question. Has anyone ever been so focused on a video game and your mom or dad asks you a question, and you say, 'What?!' and they have to repeat themselves? Turn and talk to your neighbor about a time you've been so totally focused on something that your ears stopped working."

Allow time for kids to share. Take a couple examples to share with everyone else.

"Great stories! OK, here's one more question. Have you ever been in a situation where you're so focused on yourself that you forget that there's people around you? You're at layer 11 in Minecraft looking for diamonds, and you don't even notice that your cat is on fire next to you? Turn to your neighbor and talk about that one!"

Allow time for kids to share. Take a couple examples to share with everyone else.

Wow, a lot of you have felt that way. I know how that is, too. Sometimes I get so wrapped up in what I'm doing I forget there are actually other people on the planet with me."

"You're thinking about what YOU need, what YOU want, and unfortunately you're not even considering the needs of other people around you. Why are we like that sometimes? Why do we think only of ourselves, and why is it sometimes so hard to reach out and help someone else—or even notice that other people need help?"

"These are hard questions, I know. It's a good thing we have a *(hold up the Bible)* great resource to help us figure these things out. Thankfully, we started talking about a guy last week who can help us this week, too. Anyone remember his name? Yeah, that's right! Nehemiah!"

Let's just recap, in case you weren't here last week. Nehemiah found out that the wall around his home city of Jerusalem was in ruin. The city was in danger of more enemies. He took initiative to make it right. Nehemiah traveled all the way from Persia to Jerusalem. He surveyed the damage of the wall surrounding Jerusalem. He even gave a fantastic speech to the officials of the city and inspired them and the people to help with this huge project. And it was a HUGE project. Let's see where our story picks up today.

BIBLE STORY

(VIDEO: SO & SO SHOW; SLIDES: KEY QUESTION, BASIC TRUTH)

(VIDEO: SO & SO SHOW)

"Nehemiah had a huge job in front of him that needed all of his focus and attention. But even though he was faced with building the wall, he chose to address another problem that was right before his eyes. Nehemiah looked and saw that some of his people were being treated unfairly because they were poor. And he did something about it. He stood up for them and worked to make things fairer."

"We should stand up for people who are being treated unfairly. Period. End of sentence. Kids, if you don't hear anything else I say today, hear that. Treating others differently because of the way they look, or where they're from, or how much money they have, or what they believe, is wrong."

"Think about it—it's the way Jesus saw people, isn't it? He hung out with the tax collectors, the lepers, the people society shunned because they were different or had bad reputations. He saw the value in others. He showed people how valuable they were by loving them no matter what. And He inspired them to love others.

It's helpful to remember our Basic Truth.

(SLIDE: BASIC TRUTH) "I am made for a purpose so I have value."

"We can be just like Nehemiah (and act a little more like Jesus) if we take our eyes off of our own needs to actually see someone else's. We can see the value in others when we remember that we ourselves have value because God made us and loves us.
Think on this...

(SLIDE: KEY QUESTION) "Who do you see being treated unfairly?"

What people need your help? And after you see them, what are you going to do about it? If you're not sure how to answer that question, don't worry. You'll have a chance to chat more about it with your Small Group.

"Before you head to small groups, let's go over our new monthly verse."

MEMORY VERSE

(SLIDE: MEMORY VERSE)

Work at everything you do with all your heart. Work as if you were working for the Lord. (Colossians 3:23a, NIV)



“We can take initiative to do what needs to be done—and we can work at it with all of our hearts! Sounds like a plan, don’t you think?”

PRAYER

“God, thank you for the story of Nehemiah. Thank you for helping us see how we can **[Bottom Line] look for ways to make things right**. When we see a problem that needs to be fixed or someone who’s not being treated well, give us the courage to step up and do something to help. Please show us how we can make things better for the people around us. We love you, and we ask these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.”

DISMISS TO SMALL GROUPS

SMALL GROUP

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VERSES TO TAKE WITH YOU

(Bibles, Individually-Wrapped Candies, Pennies)

What You Do:

- Form two teams.
- Make sure each team has access to a Bible or Bible App.
- Assign one of the following verses to each team:
 - Hebrews 13:16
 - Philippians 2:4
- Invite teams to look up their verse then come up with three examples of practical ways their verse can be lived out 1) at home, 2) at school, 3) in the community or world.
- Bring teams together and let them read their verse and share their examples with the others.
- Remind kids that if we’re focused on ourselves, we probably won’t see or notice the needs of others very easily. We can’t do anything to make things right if we don’t see how things are wrong in the first place.
- Ask:
 - Why do you think it’s so hard to turn our attention away from what we need or want and focus on others?
 - What can we do to become less focused on ourselves?
- Remind kids that initiative starts with SEEING what needs to be done. And more often than not, it starts with SEEING who needs to be helped and what needs to be made right.

Applicational Game:

- Give each kid five pieces of candy and a penny.
- Explain that kids will challenge someone on the other team to play one round of either Rock, Paper, Scissors, Heads or Tails coin toss, or Thumb Wrestling.
 - The winner receives one piece of candy from their opponent.
 - They can play the same game repeatedly with different kids or change it up with each round.
 - Check to make sure kids know how to play each of the games.
 - Tell kids that the game ends when someone on their team runs out of candy for more than 10 seconds.
 - When a kid is out of candy, they should start the count down by loudly counting backwards from ten to alert their team that they have a need.
- Before you begin the game, give kids a few minutes to come up with a strategy for making sure no kid on their team is left empty-handed which would end the game.
 - The goal is to not only collect candy for themselves but also see the need of someone else and do something about it so that the empty-handed player can continue to play.
- Play for a designated time or until someone on a team runs out of candy.
- Debrief the game through discussion.
 - Did your strategy for keeping your teammates in the game work? Why or why not?
 - How did it feel to need others' help?
 - How did it feel to do what you could to help the others on your team?
 - In what way did you live out Hebrews 13:16 or Philippians 2:4 in the game?
- Encourage kids to make a plan—to decide BEFORE they start their day that they're going to LOOK for the needs around them.
- Wrap up by letting kids suggest what they should do with the candy they won. How would their actions reflect what they learned from Hebrews 13:16 and Philippians 2:4? Then let the group choose the best option.

TAKE A SNAPSHOT

(Piece of Butcher Paper, Index Cards – 1 per kid, Markers)

What You Do:

- Place the butcher paper where everyone can see it.
- Write the following 4 categories across the top of the paper:
 - New kid at school
 - People who are homeless
 - People in countries that aren't safe
 - A friend whose grandparent has cancer
- Work together to brainstorm both the challenges that the people in each category would face and what they can do to help.
- If their ideas focus only on tangible needs of people within your community or other places, challenge them to also consider needs people have beyond food and clothing. (*Examples: being safe, friendship, support, fairness, acceptance, someone to stand up for them if being treated badly*)
- After brainstorming together, challenge kids to write down on the index card who they know needs help and what they can do to show initiative and help that person.

DISCUSSION

Ask the following questions and lead the group to discuss:

- We should treat others the way we want to be treated but that's not always easy. When do you find it particularly difficult to stand up for someone? Why do you think it's hard?
- When is it easy for you to step in and help make an unfair situation right?
- How would things be different at school if kids practiced treating others the way they want to be treated? What about at home? How would our world be different? What's a small way you can contribute to that change?

PRAY AND DISMISS

(Preteen GodTime Card - 1 per kid)

What You Say:

"Heavenly Father, thank you for sending Jesus to show us how to love and care for others. When we see someone who needs help, please give us the courage to do something to make things right. Remind us that you are with us, always. We love you, and we pray these things in Jesus' name, amen."

Pass out the GodTime Cards to each kid. If there's spare time, encourage kids to start looking over their GodTime card and point out how it relates to today's lesson.